THE FACULTY RETREAT—A TOOL FOR TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENT AND TEAM BUILDING

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Abstract: Explore innovative methods to advance your program’s technology initiative and staff development for all faculty—full-time and adjunct, on-campus and on-line.

One effective way to advance your program’s technology initiative and enhance team building is through the use of a one-day faculty retreat. Most programs have several sections of its introductory courses, with a narrowing enrollment in upper level courses. It is important that there be uniformity in the standards and content of course offerings and that the National Educational Technology Standards for Students be incorporated into all courses, from the elementary to the advanced.

In advance of the retreat, participants are expected to read a great deal of material and come fully prepared, so that the time at the retreat can be used to maximum advantage. Also, select a location where small groups can break out and use technology, yet easily come together to share results.

Expected outcomes of the faculty retreat can include updated courses, new approaches to student assessment; a list of skill sets that each student should have when entering and exiting each course; and creating an on-line student tutorial. Working from the perspective of Standards and Goals, using NETS as a guide, participants work in small groups on updating each course.

Keeping courses updated is a primary concern for all technology programs and a key project to be accomplished at the retreat should course updating, especially if courses were designed before NETS. Participants should be grouped by the course they teach and, at the end of their session, share ways of up-dating and improving that course. A second key element should be to create a list of skills sets students need when entering and leaving courses. Third, a program should have standardized assessment techniques, especially when courses are offered in different teaching modes—on-campus, on-line, and off-campus. A sharing of these techniques helps faculty look at different ways of assessing student performance and enables the chair to set standards.
As far as team building, it is important that all the faculty—especially the adjuncts—
understand the policies and procedures of the program, have access to all of the resources that
are available to full-time faculty, and feel part of the team. Guest speakers should include those
people who support and enhance the program, such as the directors of the library, academic
computing, graduate study, and evening student services; deans; and, if possible, invite the
president of the university to attend as well.

Minutes should be taken and shared with the participants. A program book is an
excellent reinforcement tool, not only for those faculty who attend the workshop but also for
those who teach on-line courses and live far distances. In addition, the program books serves as
a readily available orientation tool when new faculty are hired.

Including adjuncts, especially those who teach on-line and off-campus, in faculty
meetings is not a common occurrence, but it is a critical element in developing a department that
is well-motivated and delivers a standard level of service.

During this presentation the audience will have an opportunity to plan a faculty retreat
and write the agenda for the meeting.